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## CHILDHOOD

857

There are practical jokers, even among the children, who throw clinging or mildly irritating grasses (*Nama hispida* is one) at someone or hide them in his bed. 824 522

The children of an encampment organize expeditions to search for certain delicacies which are not plentiful or valuable enough to figure in adult food economy. Ground cherries, the red fruits of the nipple cacti, and willow buds are gathered, and cottonwood buds are chewed like gum. The search for honey provides another diversion: 857 222 [26]

> When I was a boy, so long ago I can hardly remember it now, there was a certain bee we used to get. When it collected honey the children caught it, split it open, and sucked out the sweet stuff from the body. They didn't eat the whole thing. Only children did this. I never saw grown-ups do it.

When hives are found in the trees, a smudge fire is started under the tree and the bees are smoked out. A cliff hive is dislodged by well-directed shots from slings. For a ground hive another method is employed: "When the hive is in the ground a boy stands over the small hole and lets the bees out one at a time. Others kill each bee as it comes out. When all the bees are killed, they dig out the hole and eat the honey."

To the stock of playthings which the child makes for himself are added toys given him by his parents or other relatives. Little girls are presented with buckskin dolls filled with grass,[9] toy cradles, water jars, and burden baskets. For the boy the obvious plaything is a small bow and some arrows made of ocean spray, mock orange, snowberry, willow, service berry, or *Edwinia americana*. As a blanket for her doll cradle the girl uses a cottontail rabbit skin. A rabbit-skin cap, with the ears left on, is made for the little boy. 524 [824] [237]

The older boys and girls enjoy swimming, a sport which a child begins to master at about the age of eight. A practical purpose is credited to another activity: 857 [481]

[9] These dolls are not supposed to approximate the human form too closely, for anything that has a great likeness to a human being but is not animate is suggestive of a corpse. The mothers would not, at first, allow their children to have dolls of European type, claiming that they were "too natural." [532] [177] [764]

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621 596 [582] A great many families of a local group are related, but not all of them. Therefore, it does not necessarily mean that a man has to marry outside the local group. The families who make up the group shift constantly. A family will often go and attach itself to some other local group.

621 222 462 The women of a local group are the ones who would go to gather mescal together. Those who went would go and come from the main group. It might be that they'd split off into smaller parties which would later rejoin. It depends on how thick the mescal is in one place and how many people there are.

621 619 484 The members of the local group can go anywhere in the territory of their band, but they are out of place if they go into the territory of another band. An individual or family of the Southern Chiricahua band might join many Southern Chiricahua local groups in turn. . . . .

621 701 926 At the time of a big raid, men from more than one local group might get together, but those from each locality would stay around their own leader. He acted as a sort of captain for them. When they made camp at night, those from one local group would stay together. For boys' training, the young fellows of a local group are the most that would be brought together at one time.

621 602 182 Though allegiance to the local group is brittle and its composition is constantly changing, it does provide a common name, base, and leadership for its members and gives them the opportunity to engage in certain industries in common. In these matters it cuts across the boundaries of the extended family, and, if a married man has blood relatives in the same local group, it offers him the opportunity to co-operate with these kin for many purposes. This means that his horizon is never entirely limited to the interests of his affinities.

### THE WOMAN AND HER HUSBAND'S RELATIVES

602 596 The married woman has no formal obligation to labor for her husband's relatives but is expected to carry on her industrial activities in company with her mother and sisters as a permanent member of the extended family in which she was born. Moreover, none of her husband's kin calls upon her to avoid them. To express approval, some of them may, however, use polite form in speaking to her.

602 195

Relatives of a boy can ask the girl he marries for polite talk if they think much of him. His own brothers and sisters and cousins can do this. The father and mother of the boy don't do this. They regard their son's wife as their own daughter. The brothers and sisters of both the father and the mother can do it though. But they don't have to. It's up to them.

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727 354 There is no evidence that conventional morality is totally discarded at this time, but there are suggestions that more freedom than usual is allowed:

535 786

> The dancing may go on for two, three, or four days. There is much feasting. Some people are eating, others are dancing. There are many marriages during this period. The Chiricahua, when they were captured and taken to Mexico, noticed that, when the Mexican people had a big victory, they always celebrated by dancing and marrying and having a good time. To get even with them, the Chiricahua turn their victories into a celebration and a dancing and marrying time. Many young men take advantage of the occasion.

727 761 Thoughts of death are not permitted to interfere with the happy mood: "Dead warriors are not mentioned in the songs, and the deaths are in no way formally announced. When the war party returns, the members state the news of the casualties privately." There is no general purifying rite for those who have come in contact with corpses during the fighting. The use by some of "ghost medicine" to stave off evil effects is "an individual matter; they don't do it in a bunch."

[783] [775] [789]

462 THE GATHERING AND UTILIZATION OF WILD FOOD PLANTS

222 The responsibility of exploiting the wild-plant resources of the region falls to the women:

[512] While the man is hunting, the woman gets up before sunrise, builds the fire if the man hasn't already done so, and cooks the morning meal, using meat if there is some, vegetables if not. Then she goes out to gather seeds or plants, leaving the small children with another woman. She gathers yucca fruit, piñon nuts, or whatever is in season and carries it all home to prepare.

Gathering, preparing, and storing fruits and vegetables provide a continual round of labor as the women follow the natural harvests:

[251] In spring they go out for mescal. They keep going for it for some time. They get plenty of it and store it up. By the time that is done they can go out after the first acorns and bring them in and store them in bags. Then the yucca fruit and the sumac berries and other things are ready.

821 805 The preoccupation with the growth of wild plants is reflected in the attitude toward the seasons and in the names of the principal time periods. Besides the four seasons, six time periods, beginning with the first signs of spring, divide the year. Their

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names, in order, are: "Little Eagles," "Many Leaves," "Large Leaves," "Large Fruit," "Earth Is Reddish Brown," and "Ghost Face." "Little Eagles" refers to early spring; "Many Leaves" covers the period of late spring and early summer; "Large Leaves" is midsummer; "Large Fruit" (some call this period "Thick with Fruit") designates the harvest time of late summer and early fall. By late fall the hills assume a color for which the term, "Earth Is Reddish-Brown" seems appropriate. Dread of the lifeless winter is expressed in the name, "Ghost Face." The entire year is called "one harvest." "Ten years ago would be ten harvests ago." Periods of time shorter than the six divisions with descriptive names are reckoned from new moon to new moon. "You say so many days from the beginning of the new moon," or, "So many new moons ago."

If food is to be gathered near home, the woman takes her large burden basket and works alone or with her daughter or sister. "They have a little jug to carry drinking water in while they are away from camp. Often they stay out all day. They eat any time they care to." When a long journey is necessary, a larger party of women will set out together. "They go in groups of six or so and keep their finds separately." Should the destination be so distant that the group cannot hope to return for some days, men or youths go along to protect them and to assist in the heavy work.

Through most of the winter and until mid-spring the household must depend on stored vegetables saved from the preceding year. But in the spring the narrow-leafed yucca sends up a central stem which is gathered while it is still green, tender, and without blossoms. Lengths of the stalk are placed on a bed of embers and roasted until they are soft. The charred outer surface is peeled, and the stalks are eaten without further preparation. Thicker stalks are sometimes roasted in an underground oven. A hole is dug in the earth (one is described as four feet long and three and a half feet deep) and a fire is kindled in it. Stones are heated by placing them on top of the burning wood, and the oven is lined with them. The woman peels the pieces of stalk, pounds them or cuts them in half, places them on the

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Sometimes the "heads" are carried, on horses, in loosely woven, traylike containers made of yucca, and the sun-drying is done at home. Most of the mescal is stored in the sun-dried, caked state. When a part of a dried crown is to be eaten, it is soaked in water until it softens. It may be mixed with juniper or sumac berries, piñon nuts, or walnuts for variety. The leaves have a pithy, inedible center, but the inner surface of each has a soft layer that is chewed or scraped.

Ordinarily, the woman goes out several times to gather mescal, for she must have enough for general use and for storage. Since each operation—the trip to the place where the plants grow, the roasting and drying, and the return journey—requires several days, this is a busy period. By the time the mescal stalks have flowered and the plants are unfit for use, summer is at hand, and other foodstuffs have made their appearance.

In early summer the locust tree is in flower. The woman picks the blossoms and boils them with meat or other foods, or she boils them in water, dries them in the sun, and puts them away. Then, when she wishes to use them, "she can cook them over again." The first of a number of varieties of wild onion is ready, too. Onions are eaten raw or boiled with other vegetables and meat. Later at least two other kinds are gathered. In the early part of the growing season, too, especially when other food is scarce, the woman strips off the bark from the Western yellow pine, scrapes its inner surface, and heaps together the soft, sweet material.

Though most of the sumac berries are not ripe until late summer and fall, one variety is ready now: "It [*Rhus microcarpa*] has a small red berry which is picked and brought back. The berries are spread out, and the good ones are picked out, washed, and put in the sunshine to dry. After being ground, they are mixed with mescal, and the mixture does not spoil."

From midsummer on, in certain localities, the berries of the one-seeded juniper ripen:

> They have a reddish tinge when they are ripe and fall to the ground. The women pick them up and put them in sacks or burden baskets they bring with them. When they are very ripe, they can be eaten raw, or, if they are still very hard, they can be boiled just enough to make them soft. Another way to use

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them is to boil them until they are quite soft and then mash them with the hands to get the seeds out. What is left is boiled down until just a thick juice is left. This is used more for health than food, although it is considered a regular food. It has a laxative effect, and we eat it as the white man eats prunes. It has a pleasant taste; you can eat a great deal of it, and it won't do you any harm.

In midsummer, too, the first of the edible seed-bearing plants are ready. The woman gathers the seeds by running her hand through the tops and dropping the seeds in a hide receptacle. Threshing is accomplished by working the seeds around manually in the sack. To winnow them, the seeds are poured from a tray basket to an outstretched hide below. The seeds are boiled and eaten or ground on the metate with the mano and reduced to flour from which bread is made.

Now such fruits as raspberries, strawberries, and the earliest of the wild grapes can be gathered. All these are eaten fresh. Grapes are sometimes dried and preserved, and raspberries may be crushed, dried, and kept in caked form.

In the mountains in late summer the woman finds such varied fruits and plants as the chokecherry, the mulberry, a species of potato (*Solanum jamesii*, Torr.), and wood sorrel. Chokecherries are eaten raw when they are very ripe and not infrequently are dried, ground, and stored. Dried chokecherries are soaked in water and eaten without further preparation. Potatoes are boiled and eaten soon after they are gathered or are dried, stored, and ground into flour for making bread. Mulberries are served fresh or caked and preserved. Wood sorrel is eaten raw or cooked with other greens. Another potato-like food (*Ipomoea lacunosa*) is available at about the same time. "It is like a potato in taste. It's white and looks like an onion, but it doesn't taste anything like an onion. It's about half the size of an onion. These are eaten raw. You can keep them for a couple of weeks."

During the same period, in the lowlands, such plants as the nipple cactus and the pitahaya yield their fruit. Of the latter, the more important of the two, this description is given:

This cactus is like the giant cactus, but smaller. It grows in Old Mexico. The plant is taller than a man. The fruit is as large as a man's fist. When the pod opens, it is ready to be picked. It is ready about the middle of August. The

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222 262 252 [251] fruit is red and is eaten raw. The fruit is dried near the place where it is picked and after it is dried it is piled into burden baskets and brought home. Some of it is eaten fresh, but most of it is dried in the sun, caked, and stored. It never gets really dry; it is always sweet and sticky. Sometimes the fruit drops to the ground, and there are many ants in it when you pick it up.

At lower elevations the yellow fruits of the screw bean or tornillo are one of the first of the fall foods to mature. These sweet pods are eaten raw or are washed, dried, and ground into flour for making bread.

For those groups whose territory extends well to the south, the fruit of the giant cactus is available at approximately this time:

We eat the fruit raw when it is ripe. The women take a long reed stem or a pole and pick the fruit off with it, for it grows high on the plant. They cake some of it as they do mescal and yucca fruit. It never gets real dry; it is always sweet and sticky. It is ripe about the last of August and in September. When you eat it, you eat the seeds and all. The seeds are small, like those of figs.

Between the ripening of other foods, the last of the sumac berries are picked. No sooner are these stored than the broad-leafed yucca or datil fruit is ready:

262 251 252 222 When the Chiricahua are in the hills, they prepare yucca fruit for winter food. They gather it in the fall, in the latter part of September here [at Mescalero, New Mexico]. It is a pinkish color on the outside when it is ripe. It is good to eat raw when it is ripe. When it is very ripe, it doesn't have to be roasted. It is just cut open, the seeds are taken out, and it is spread out in the sun to dry. It will keep all winter then.

But most of the fruit is picked before it is quite ripe. The women gather a large amount. They roast it on the coals. When the fruits are black on top, they are taken off, and the burned outside is peeled off. They are split in two, and the seeds are taken out. The fruit is then put on a hide and pounded. Then they put it over a container in a basket and let the juice run down. They can drink this juice or pour it over the fruit again. It makes the yucca fruit soft and sticky. After that they spread the whole mass out to dry in the sun. If rain comes, they have to cover it up. It gets dry in the sun in two days. While it is drying, they take sunflower blossoms and put them on to make it pretty. They pray while they do it.

When it is dry, this fruit can be stored. It will keep like a cracker. During the fall the women put piles of it away for emergency or for the winter. When it is wanted, it is made ready for use by soaking and is then used alone or mixed with other things.

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In the mountains at this season are gathered the sweet red berries of the algerita. When these are cooked a little, they soften to the consistency of a jelly. A portion of algerita berries is dried and kept for winter use. Currants are picked whenever the women, in foraging, come upon them. Hawthorne fruits are utilized when they are found in abundance, but the dependence upon them is slight. The berries of the alligator juniper ripen in the fall and are at once added to the household stores.

Ready at this time also is the fruit of the prickly pear cactus:

When the fruit is ripe, while it is still on the plant, it is first cleaned of spines with a brush of stiff grass. It is then picked off with tongs of wood made by bending a branch on itself. While it is still held in these tongs, it is again brushed with the grass. Then the woman puts the fruit in her burden basket, and when she has many of them she takes them home. The fruit can be eaten fresh, or it can be dried and saved. It must be preserved by drying or eaten at once.

To dry the fruits, she splits them, takes the seeds out, and leaves them in the sun. They dry quickly if the sun is strong, but during rainy weather it takes a long time. After the seeds are removed, the pulp is mashed sometimes, and the juice that runs from it is put over the fruit again. It is kept in this caked form, for the layer of juice acts to preserve it. If it is thoroughly sun dried, when it is wanted for use, it is usually boiled. Sometimes soaking it in water without boiling will soften it enough for eating.

Sometimes the fruit is mashed, the pulp is thrown away, and the juice is kept for a drink. It is drunk while it is fresh and is considered healthful.

The mesquite beans are now large and ripe in the lowlands. These beans are used in a number of ways. The woman grinds them to flour on the metate and from this flour makes what can best be described as a pancake. Or she prepares a kind of sweet, thick gruel by boiling the beans and working the softened mass with her hands. She also cooks the whole beans with meat; then the seed coats are spit out when the food is eaten.

Walnuts, one of the important products, are sought at this time:

The Chiricahua use wild walnuts. They carry them around in a parfleche. When they want to eat them fresh, they just pick up those that have fallen on the ground. If the nuts have been there for a while and are dry, they just crack them and eat them. If there are many of them, they save some. In the winter they sit and crack nuts and give them to their children.

But if they want to mix them with other things, like mesquite beans, they do

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262 it differently. Then they gather them green, and each woman cuts a long stick,
252 six or seven feet long, just heavy enough so that a person can sit there all day long hitting the nuts and hulling them. One woman will be sitting with hers spread out on the ground before her; another will be a little distance away. They
[251] have to do this near water, near a creek, and wash them. Next they spread them out to dry for many days when the weather is good.

Then in wintertime they use the nuts with mesquite beans or mescal. They sit there and pound the nuts with a stone, shell and all, just as fine as possible. The mesquite beans are boiled and strained. For a strainer they use sticks that cross or a branch that has many twigs. This catches nearly all the coarse material. Then they put the nuts in but do not boil the mixture any more. It is ready to eat then.

[88] When this is finished, you can dip in there with your bowl and hold it to your mouth and drink it like soup. This food is used nearly always at the girl's puberty rite.

[276] It's just the opposite from chewing tobacco. When you chew tobacco, you spit out the juice and leave in the coarse stuff; when you eat this, you swallow the juice and spit out the coarse stuff.

[184] An Eastern Chiricahua added to the above that his people boil the meats of walnuts as well.

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262 The nuts of the Western yellow pine are not large enough to gain much attention: "We don't pick them much; just a few now and then." Of much more importance are the seeds of the
[252] piñon pine. "When the outside shell is still green, the women pick many of them, heat them, and then, when they are shaken or stroked, the little nuts come out. Some ripen on the trees by themselves, open, and the nuts fall to the ground. The women pick these up too."

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262 The women parch the piñon nuts for a few minutes until "they get a little darker; then they will keep." There are a number of
[251] ways of utilizing the seeds. They may be cracked with a stone and the meats eaten alone, or the meats, when a sufficient quantity of them is shelled, "are mixed with yucca fruit which has been baked on coals; it makes good eating." As in the preparation of walnuts, the seeds, shell and all, may be ground fine on the metate and mixed with other foods. Mesquite beans, mescal, yucca fruit, and sumac berries have been mentioned as other foods with which they are combined.

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The acorns of both the Gambel oak and the live oak are valuable foods, for the acorn is used in a kind of pemmican:

In the autumn the women wait until the acorns are ripe and fall to the ground. Then they gather many of them and bring them in. Some people leave them in sacks just as they are when gathered and later crack the shells with their teeth and eat the nuts.

But some roast the nuts a little, crack them, and put them out in the sun to dry. Then they use the nuts with the dry [jerked] deer meat and some fat. First they pound the dry meat on a rock and mix it with a little fat. Then they take the acorn meats and pound them up fine. After that they mix the meat and the acorns together. They shape it like meat balls, and these keep all winter. If they are camping in any place, they can have it for any meal. When it is made this way it is all ready to eat at any time. You eat it just as it is. Because it is all prepared, it is a good thing to take on a journey. When a big group is on a journey and a child is hungry, they give it some of this.

During the summer and fall the women gather various greens for flavoring stews and soups. Lamb's quarter is one of these. It is cooked with meat or bones, chili, and onions. Locust pods, the white seeds of the anglepod, the seeds of the unicorn plant, and still other varieties of wild potatoes and onions are procured at this time.

A number of grasses and other plants (among them dropseed grass, tumbleweed, pigweed, spurge, and sunflower) are harvested for their seeds. Most of these are hand threshed as previously described, or a large amount of the seed-bearing tops is cut, put on a hide, dried, and beaten with a stick. The largest stems and leaves are picked out by hand, and the remainder winnowed "by letting them fall to a hide from a tray basket." The same end may be attained by "tossing the seeds in a hide; then the leaves are blown away."

To obtain sunflower seeds in quantity, the woman fills her burden basket with the flowers and later lays them out to dry at home. When the plants are thoroughly dried, the seeds can easily be shaken out. Or, if the seeds are very ripe, the back of the sunflower head is shaken or is given a sharp blow with a stick, and the seeds fall into a burden basket which has been placed under the plant. These seeds are ground up and are added

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222 252 262 [251] to meat dishes to form a gravy, or they are made into flour for bread baked in hot ashes. Sunflower seeds and other seeds are often placed with hot coals in a tray basket and "worked around" until they are parched.

824 [221] In the fall when the tule is yellow with pollen, the tops of the plants are cut off, brought to camp, and dried. Then the dry tops are shaken or struck over an outspread buckskin. Pollen is gathered, without special ceremony, from other plants and from trees by shaking them after placing a piece of well-tanned, uncolored [237] buckskin to catch it. Buckskin is always the proper receptacle. It is said that "pollen would go through cloth," but more important is the feeling that "it would be wrong" to use anything but buckskin for pollen bags and containers.

222 462 [221] From early spring to the onset of winter, the woman gathers fruits and vegetables which grow at different elevations and in different areas. She does not keep at this task steadily, for she has many other duties. But she must be ready at the report of a good natural harvest to leave at once for the region where it is. 222 484 592 521 [596] Often it is near by; but many times the site is so far distant, and the work ahead so time-consuming, that the entire household goes with her and sets up a temporary camp. Using this as a base, the husband hunts while his wife gathers the wild crop that has drawn them there. Not infrequently more than one household or an extended family consisting of a number of households temporarily leaves the larger encampment or local group on such an errand. Thus, in order that the woman may obtain the various foods in the order in which they mature, the household remains a mobile unit, ready to detach itself from the local group at short notice and to rejoin this group or another just as easily.

222 While the women are foraging, they are on the lookout for beehives:

[824] Honey is found in the stalks of mescal, sotol, and the narrow-leafed yucca. The bee deposits the honey in the stalk. The bee which does this is a big yellow one. The women search for honey in these stalks. They gather it in the fall. They split the stalk to find it. It's like candy. I used to be great for honey!

Honey is also obtained from a large yellow bee that nests in the ground. To secure this store, the device of allowing the bees to

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emerge one by one and killing them as they come out is employed. A ceremonial touch is given the unearthing of these ground hives. "When the Chiricahua come upon one of these nests, they mark a big circle and say, 'May you be as big as this.' Then they open it up."

When hives are discovered in trees or in logs, a smudge fire is used to smoke the bees out. The co-operation of a man skilled in the use of the sling is required when hives are found among the rocks in cliffs. "He throws at it with a sling and brings it down. The bees leave the hive. Then the people go and get the honey. We put honey in drinks and eat it with bread." The bees which nest in the cliffs and bluffs are described as smaller and darker in color than the others. Sometimes a hive is wrapped in a hide and brought home before it is opened.

### THE COOKING AND PRESERVATION OF MEAT PRODUCTS

The woman is not only responsible for the preparation and storage of the food which she herself collects but is expected to take charge of the meat which the man contributes to the household:

> A man hunts and butchers the game. He brings it in to the woman. After that it's her job to take care of it.

> I never heard of a man cooking when his wife was around in the old days. He doesn't now either. Getting water is a woman's job too. I don't see any men doing it even now. The same is true of getting and cutting wood. The men sit around and smoke and tell stories when they are at home.

Certain parts of an animal are seldom eaten. Ritual restrictions placed upon individual members of the household must be kept in mind too:

> Some people ate pancreas a long time ago, I believe. I'm not sure. Now they don't do it. Some shaman started telling people not to eat this and that, and now they can hardly eat anything from the inside, it seems.

> The Chiricahua does not like to eat any meat from the head.

> It is dangerous to eat the heart. As a general rule the Chiricahua do not eat the heart of an animal. I think to myself, "Well, I don't know what there is to it, but I won't do it because it looks dangerous." My wife won't do it either.

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934)1936
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MESCALERO



## GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

101 [484] These Apache were a highly mobile group and their geographical background is, therefore, not so well understood as is that of sedentary tribes. Also in the early days of Spanish penetration they were known by various names and confused with other groups. In view of these circumstances it is impracticable to try to fully describe their geographical setting; hence, only a few examples of this aspect of their environment will be presented.

133 137 The territory through which they ranged constituted a rich variety topographically and climatically, ranging from the flat lowlands of the Southwest, such as the Tularosa Basin, where sagebrush *(Artemisia filifolia)*, creosote bush, Mormon tea, cacti, yuccas, and mesquite comprise the characteristic vegetation; through the low hills where mescal and sotol abound; the foothills of the mountains where one-seeded juniper, piñon, and three-leaved sumac grow in abundance; to the higher elevations covered by growths of western yellow pine, spruce, and aspen. The mild, sunny winters and devastatingly hot summers of the lowlands contrasted greatly with the severe, snow-ridden winters of the mountains, although the mountains were cool and invigorating during other seasons of the year. The fauna varied with the elevation, too. In the flats were the prairie dogs, rabbits, and antelope; in the mountains, deer, elk, and mountain sheep.

132 133 136 133

221 [182] Of all this variety the Apache was the master. He moved with the seasonal change of weather, and followed the wild food harvests as they occurred. His adaptation and response to the ecological region in which he lived was sensitive and complete. When the colder weather came he removed to a lower altitude; in summer he was in the highlands again. When the mesquite and screwbean ripened on the flats, parties of Apache were there to gather them; when the hawthorn hips were ready in the highlands, Apache were nearby to take them. These people knew nature's calendar by heart, and no matter whether a grass seed ripened or a

[222]

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934)1936
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CHIRICAHUA
MESCALERO

# PLANTS USED BY THE MESCALERO AND CHIRICAHUA APACHE FOR FOOD, DRINK, AND NARCOTICS

## Foods

The stately Agave, a characteristic feature of desert vegetation of southwestern United States, constituted a very important source of vegetal food for these Apache. Several native species were utilized, but the most abundant one in the area was *Agave parryi*, commonly known as mescal or century plant (although these common names apply equally well to several other species). Contrary to popular opinion, the Agave bloom in much less than one hundred years; however, each plant blooms only once, after which the leaves wither and die. Around the dead plants are usually to be seen a number of young plants formed from suckers of the parent plant. It is from the food itself, known as mescal, prepared from *Agave parryi*, that the Mescalero Apache have been given their name *(28:*455).

Although not so extensively as formerly the Apache women still make expeditions to regions where Agave grows in abundance for the purpose of collecting the edible portions of the plant. These visits are usually made in late May or early June when the reddish flower stalks begin to appear and the plants are most palatable. Plants not blooming are known as "man" plants; those bearing a flower stalk are designated as "woman," and the Indians advise against using the "man" plants for food since they are bitter and spoil all mescal with which they are baked. This is because the "man" is smoking and the smoke permeates all the mescal in the pit. The "man" changes into "woman" when it flowers, then dries up and is gone.

The crowns of the mescal plants are dug out with three-foot sticks cut from oak branches *(Quercus* sp.) and flattened at the end. This end, when pounded with a rock into the stem of the plant just below the crown, permits the crown to be removed readily. A broad stone knife is used

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The crowns of this species were gathered any time from the middle of March to the end of summer, the portion of the stem from the ground to the leaves being peeled and baked overnight in an underground oven in a manner similar to that in which mescal was prepared. The yellow-to-brown baked product was known as *nigahe*. After being dried in the sun, broken into pieces, and softened in water the rather sweet product was ready to be eaten. The tender central leaves of the related datil *(Yucca baccata)* were cooked in soups, boiled with meat, and used in various similar combinations.

The large flowers of the narrow-leaved *Yucca elata* were also boiled and eaten as a vegetable, but the less palatable ones of the broad-leaved *Y. baccata* were eaten only if they could be obtained before the summer rain, since the Apache maintain that they are bitter thereafter.

The fruits of several species of Yucca were also utilized as food. The somewhat banana-shaped fruits of the datil *(Y. baccata)*, as well as of the palma *(Y. macrocarpa)* were gathered before they were fully ripe, laid on grass *(Andropogon furcatus)* on the ground, covered with the grass, and allowed to finish ripening in the sun. After roasting in hot ashes the hard black covering was stripped off, the fruit split lengthwise and the seeds removed. The white pulp was then ground and made into large cakes, which might be stored indefinitely. Frequently the roasted fruit was pounded to pulp on an animal hide and allowed to drain in a basket placed over a pan. The juice might be drunk or poured over and mixed with the cake pulp, making the latter soft and sticky as well as aiding in preserving it. In either case the pulp was spread on Yucca leaves to dry for two days in the sun, being always adorned with sunflower blossoms to "make it pretty." The Indians prayed while placing the sunflowers, the ceremonial significance being that the sunflower was used as a symbol of the fructifying influence of the sun, and this use constituted a prayer that the sun continue to make the yield plentiful year after year. The Mescalero Apache tell of a Yucca which grows near El Paso and has a "white" fruit and sweet sticky buds. They were

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263 picked, cut open, dried on sticks, and used in sweetening different foods.

262 [178] The fruits of various genera of cacti are still used as food but no longer constitute an important article of diet among these Apache. Formerly the Chiricahua Apache, [137] who ranged in western New Mexico, southeastern Arizona, and to the south in Old Mexico, utilized as food the fruit of the sahuaro or giant cactus *(Carnegiea gigantea)* and of the organ-pipe cactus or pitahaya dulce *(Lemaireocereus thurberi)*. Their name for it was *madaya*, an Apache corruption of pitahaya. [171] The gathering and utilization of these fruits by the Chiricahua Apache was not unlike that reported by Castetter and Underhill *(5:21)* for the Papago; [184] the reader is referred to that paper for a discussion of the subject. The Mescalero Apaches never have used these species as they do not grow within their present or past range.

252 262 [413] [824] [251] [824] The ripe fruit of a number of species of Opuntia, prickly pear cactus, was commonly utilized as food. The ripe fruits, or tunas, were removed with a pair of wooden tongs, made by doubling a pliable branch, and cleaned of spines with a brush of stiff stems of sacaton grass *(Sporobolus wrightii)* while held with the tongs. The fruit was then placed in burden baskets and taken home to be eaten fresh or dried and stored. To dry, the fruit was split lengthwise, freed of seeds, and placed on big blue stem grass *(Andropogon furcatus)* in the sun. Sun-dried fruit was usually boiled before eating, although soaking in water sometimes softened it [251] enough for use. Sometimes, after the seeds were removed, the fruit was mashed into a pulp and stored in this caked [153] form. Many of the Indians of the Southwest contend that these tunas or nopales must be eaten with discretion as too much of the fruit causes a fever; Bourke *(2:44)* corroborates this. [222] [482] [251] The Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache women collected the tunas in large baskets carried on their backs, suspended from a tumpline which rested on the upper part of the chest. The split fruit was spread out to dry in the sun. Tunas formerly constituted a very important Apache food.

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252 262 137 way. Children commonly ate the sweet bark of sumac *(Rhus cismontana)* as a delicacy.

263 222 137 Not unlike the above was the obtaining of sugar from the box elder maple *(Acer negundo)*. In olden times, before sugar was easily obtainable commercially, these Indians secured material for sweetening by boiling the inner bark, and outer portions of the wood just beneath the bark, until [251] the sugar which it contained crystallized out. Also scrapings from the inner bark were dried and placed in the *xel* (parfleche) for winter use. Likewise sap from the New Mexico maple *(Acer neomexicana)* was collected and boiled to obtain syrup and sugar.

252 262 137 A number of species of fruits were occasionally eaten but did not constitute important Apache foods. Among these were strawberries *(Fragaria bracteata)* and the purplish fruits of the wild privet *(Forestiera neomexicana)*, which were always eaten without preparation. Raspberries [251] *(Rubus arizonicus)*, mulberries *(Morus microphylla)*, and hawthorne fruits *(Crataegus cerronis)* were either eaten fresh or pressed into pulpy cakes, dried, and stored for winter use.

Wild gooseberries and currants were quite commonly used. The purplish red fruits of the spiny-fruited gooseberry *(Ribes pinetorum)* has a pleasant acid flavor when ripe in September, at which time the spines may be easily [251] brushed from the fruits. They were ground and compressed into cakes for winter consumption. Another gooseberry *(R. leptanthum)*, which has smooth fruits, somewhat larger than the former species, was eaten fresh or made into cakes for use during the winter. This species was the most eagerly sought because of the size of its fruits. The rather insipid fruits of two species of black currant, *Ribes wolfii* and *R. mescalerium*, were at times eaten without preparation [251] by these Indians. Fruits of the former, in earlier times, [198] were ground, dried, and pressed into cakes for storage, but are now used for jelly; those of the latter species, however, are usually cooked. Grapes *(Vitis arizonicus)*, which grow